

## Highlights:

- California's Family PACT Program provides a framework to detail client rights and provider responsibilities, with the aim of promoting informed decision-making and actions for optimal family planning and reproductive health.
- The seven standards of care include: informed consent; confidentiality; linguistic and cultural competence; access to care; availability of covered services; clinical and preventive services; and education and counseling.
- An essential component of Family PACT care requires providers to offer reproductive health education and counseling to their clients.
- Family PACT promotes clients' full freedom of choice to meet their family planning and reproductive health needs.

## Fact Sheet On

# Client Rights & Provider Responsibilities

## Background

Client rights and provider responsibilities are central to quality family planning and reproductive health care. Client rights may include, but are not limited to access, choice, confidentiality, and dignity.<sup>1</sup> Clients who fully participate in medical encounters benefit when they take responsibility for making decisions, actively communicate with providers, and insist on good care.<sup>2</sup> To respect clients' rights, providers have certain responsibilities, such as maintaining clinical competency and providing adequate education and counseling to allow clients to make informed choices. To be effective, providers must understand and respect clients' perspectives and expectations, while communicating in a manner easily understood by clients.<sup>3</sup> California's Family PACT Program has developed a framework to detail client rights and provider responsibilities, with the aim of promoting informed decision-making for optimal family planning and reproductive health.

## Family PACT Program

California's Family PACT Program provides clinical services for family planning and reproductive health at no cost to eligible uninsured residents, filling a critical gap in health care for the indigent, low-income, and working poor. Women and men are eligible if they reside in California, are at risk of pregnancy or causing pregnancy, have a gross family income at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level,<sup>4</sup> and have no other source of health care coverage for family planning services. The Family PACT Program is administered by the California Department of Health Services, Office of Family Planning.

## Standards of Care

The Family PACT Program Standards outline the rights and responsibilities for both clients and participating providers.<sup>5</sup> These seven standards, listed below, detail the scope, type, and quality of care required for the provision of comprehensive reproductive health and family planning services.<sup>6</sup>

### 1. Informed Consent

- Voluntary, without bias or coercion
- Presented in a language the client understands
- Client consent required regardless of age

### 2. Confidentiality

- Personal privacy and dignity respected
- Clients informed about confidentiality rights
- Personal information treated as privileged communication

### 3. Linguistic and Cultural Competence

- Culturally sensitive services in a language understood by the client
- Materials appropriate to client's language and literacy level



#### 4. Access to Care

- All services provided directly or by referral at no cost to client
- Clients served without regard to gender, race, marital status, disability, or parity
- New clients to be seen within three weeks or referred to another provider
- Referrals available for medical and psychosocial services beyond the scope of Family PACT

#### 5. Availability of Options

- All temporary and permanent contraceptive methods available
- Freedom of choice for contraceptive method
- Referral information for all options provided with pregnancy test results

#### 6. Clinical and Preventive Services

- Comprehensive health history including risk factors
- Reproductive health exam including Pap smear, periodic follow-up exams
- Breast or testicular self-exam instructions
- Provision of all contraceptive methods including emergency contraception and sterilization
- Pregnancy testing; limited infertility services
- STI/HIV screening; Chlamydia testing for all female clients under age 25
- STI management and Hepatitis B vaccine

#### 7. Education and Counseling

- Ongoing assessment of client's reproductive health education and counseling needs including sexual practices, partner relationship, and pregnancy plans
- Adequate verbal and written information to make informed choices
- Promotion of positive reproductive health behaviors
- Counseling staff with appropriate reproductive health knowledge and counseling skills functioning under supervision of enrolled Family PACT providers

The seven Family PACT Program Standards are incorporated into the initial provider training for the Family PACT Program and reinforced in the *Family PACT Policies, Procedures and Billing Instructions Manual* to promote quality improvement for providers. Adherence to these standards is a requirement for all enrolled Family PACT providers.

### Conclusion

The Family PACT Program strives to promote client rights and provider responsibilities. Through a variety of policies and procedures, including the establishment of its seven standards of care, the Family PACT Program facilitates clients' abilities to make informed choices and decisions, which are critical to comprehensive family planning and reproductive health care. The Family PACT Program continues to provide quality, comprehensive family planning and reproductive health care to women and men in need throughout California.

This information was compiled by the University of California, San Francisco, Center for Reproductive Health Research & Policy under contract #00-90982 with the California Department of Health Services – Office of Family Planning.

<sup>1</sup> International Planned Parenthood Federation, Rights of the Client. IPPF Medical Bulletin Vol. 37, No.5, October 2003.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Maximizing Access and Quality. Improving Client-Provider Interaction. Population Reports Series Q, Number 1. Fall 2003.

<sup>4</sup> For a family unit of one, 200% of the Federal Poverty Level is \$18,620, increasing by \$6,360 for each additional person.

<sup>5</sup> For details see the *Family PACT Policies, Procedures and Billing Instructions Manual*. August 2001.

<sup>6</sup> Brindis C, Darney P. *Family PACT Program Evaluation Report*. A report to the State of California, Department of Health Services, Office of Family Planning. 2000.